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Volunteer CARE

**Illinois Department of
Children and Family Services**



Troubled families throughout Illinois need the kind of help you can give. Why not join the hundreds of volunteers who are making a lifetime of difference for children and their families?

It's not easy being a parent today. And when unemployment, poor housing, lack of transportation, or other stress enters the picture, responsibilities can seem insurmountable. As parents struggle to cope with problems, the needs of their children frequently go unmet. Neglect and abuse may follow.

You can reach out to families in your own community who will benefit from your skills and volunteered time. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) can show you how. Are you a good listener? Can you organize? Would you enjoy the challenge of finding the right social service to solve a family problem?

There's a volunteer program at DCFS waiting for you.

Opportunities abound for drivers, recreation leaders, office workers, and others willing to lend their talents for a neighbor's benefit. Sometimes a youth needs an advocate to provide friendship and guidance. Sometimes a family needs someone who can take a sick child to the doctor's office. No matter how limited you think your skills are, DCFS probably can find a service for you.

After you join our team, staff workers from DCFS will provide training and supervision. Authorized travel expenses will be paid by DCFS. And our staff will keep in close touch with you, so that your work will be both productive and personally rewarding.

Volunteers from every walk of life have made contributions. . . singles and couples



. . . college students and senior citizens. All have found a place in our agency. All have found ways they can help a neighbor. You, too, can select a volunteer service option that matches your time and interest.

Visitation Assistant: When children are cared for in a foster home, weekly visits between them and their parents are usually arranged to maintain and improve family ties. Visitation assistants provide transportation and frequently stay to observe the visits. They also assist with refreshments, games, and conversations to put everyone at ease.

Visiting Grandparent: Many families are isolated from the support traditionally given by grandparents and other relatives. The Visiting Grandparent program returns some



of that lost support. Volunteers take children to the park, library, or museum for an enriching visit—while giving parents valuable personal time for themselves. An adventurous spirit can make this an exciting job for any older volunteer.

Children's Workshop Leader: Workshop leaders help children develop social and learning skills in weekly classes. Positive values and self-confidence are reinforced in a wide variety of activities. Those who enjoy art and craft projects, story-telling sessions, and other recreational activities should like this job. Patience and imagination will go a long way here.

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Youth Advocate: Older children and teenagers need an adult's guidance as they struggle with peer pressure, school problems, and independence. Youth advocates act as role models. They strengthen a youth's self-confidence with recreational activities and work experiences. Openness, honesty, and a good knowledge of community resources will be powerful tools in this job.

Family Friend: Families with young children may need guidance in child care and household management. Weekly visits by a Family Friend volunteer can bring dramatic improvements in a relatively short time. Family Friends help with shopping, medical appointments, agency contacts, and general parenting



skills. Volunteers who enjoy listening, talking, and the chance to demonstrate good parenting behavior will like this position.

Clerical/Transportation Aide: People who like to type, file, and organize materials will always find an opportunity to serve at DCFS.

Your efforts will help us direct more staff time and money toward helping those in need. Drivers are also needed to transport parents and children to medical and counseling appointments.

Every two seconds of every day a DCFS worker comes to the aid of a client. Yet with more than 53,000 children and their families in need, there are never enough hands to go around. Will you help us reach out to your neighbors? Call the office listed below, or write to:

Office of Communication/Community
Relations
Department of Children and Family Services
406 East Monroe Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1498

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